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TAXONOMIC REMARKS ON THE CAROLINA  
CHICKADEE, *PENTHESTES CAROLINENSIS*.

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At the Charleston meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1928 the senior author made some informal remarks on this species, the substance of which may here be placed on record, together with certain additional considerations. The Carolina Chickadee is a good example of the gradual increase in size from south to north which some species of birds show. Specimens from the southern limit of its range in peninsular Florida are remarkably small, and mainly on this account were separated by Bangs in 1903 under the appropriate sub-specific name *impiger*. Ridgway promptly accepted the name on this basis, as also did the A. O. U. Committee. Ridgway (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 50, III, 1904, 404) was also the first to call attention to the relatively large size of northern examples. When the senior author came to work over the series in the Carnegie Museum collection some years ago he was able to confirm Ridgway's remarks on this point. Ten adult males (in good plumage) from Virginia, the District of Columbia, western Pennsylvania, and Indiana average: wing, 63.5 mm.; tail, 55.5 mm. The same number of comparable specimens from western Florida (Whitfield), on the contrary, average: wing, 61; tail, 51. The study of a larger series which has come in since the original measurements were made does not change the results.

The western Florida series were identified as true *carolinensis*, on the basis of their close agreement in size with the measurements of South Carolina specimens given by Ridgway (l. c.). Now we find that while the 1931 edition of the A. O. U. Check-List restricts *impiger* to the "Peninsula

of Florida" Mr. Arthur H. Howell (Florida Bird Life, 1932, 343) extends its range to include Walton County, whence our Whitfield series came, and inferentially excludes typical *carolinensis* from the avifauna of that State. We are loath to accept this alignment, and after again going over the Whitfield birds (28 specimens) still think that they should be referred to *carolinensis* proper. If we are correct in so doing, there remains the question of the disposition of the specimens from the northern portion of the range of the species. Certainly they are fully as different from the western Florida series as these are from the small birds of southern Florida, and if the latter are to stand under a different name so ought the northern birds also. It is simply a question of whether it is desirable to recognize three races instead of only two, in a case where the original specific name is based on an intermediate form. At the Charleston meeting the opinion was expressed that the northern bird was scarcely worth naming, since it would be only a "millimeter race" at best. Clearly, however, the southern race *impiger* rests on no better basis. If the one is entitled to a name, so also is the other. The time may come when it may be adjudged best to sink *impiger* under *carolinensis* proper—a procedure which would leave the northern bird stranded on the shore of taxonomic uncertainty and instability. Perhaps after all it would be better, at least provisionally, to provide the latter with a name.

***Penthestes carolinensis extimus*, subsp. nov.**

*Type*.—No. 117,167, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Bethany, West Virginia, January 3, 1934; George M. Sutton. Measurements: wing, 67; tail, 56.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Penthestes carolinensis carolinensis* (Audubon), but averaging larger, sex for sex; pale edgings of wings and tail averaging considerably more conspicuous; sides and flanks brighter reddish brown; and sides of head slightly grayer.<sup>1</sup>

*Range*.—New Jersey west at least to Missouri, and southward to Tennessee and western North Carolina.

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<sup>1</sup> In the junior author's collection are 24 specimens of *extimus*, all of which were carefully washed at the time of preparation. The lightness of the wing- and tail-edgings and brightness of the red-brown sides and flanks show plainly in these. Specimens in worn breeding plumage (late May, June, July) do not show these characters so plainly as do specimens in fresh fall plumage, however.—G. M. S.